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How Col. Amoss Works

Global Private Eye Did—
Or Didn't—Help Pole's Flight

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(The Last of a Series)

Col. Ulius L. Amoss, director of operations of a private intelligence-gathering organization called International Services of Information Foundation (ISI), first gained national newspaper notice in connection with the flight of a Russian MIG-15 to the West.

A Polish lieutenant, Franciszek Jarecki, escaped with the undamaged jet, said to be the first to fall into Allied hands. The story published back in March was that former Gov. Preston Lane of Maryland and some others, working with Colonel Amoss, put up something like \$10,000 to bring about the coup. (Colonel Amoss said that the sum actually was \$7500.)

Lieutenant Jarecki, when he visited Washington in May, was emphatic in denying that he got any American help in his escape. He said he had first heard rumors of such help when he was in Copenhagen.

"I got no help from anyone," he said. "Even my dear-est friends didn't know what I was going to do."

Colonel Amoss said the Polish flier was telling the truth as he saw it.

Colonel Amoss has sharply revised the story of his part

in Lieutenant Jarecki's escape. At first, in a letter to ISI subscribers, he stated flatly, as a "boast"—the word is Amoss'—that the delivery of the MIG was "the accomplishment" of his intelligence network.

Some time later, the claims were considerably milder.

Now, after the passage of some weeks, Colonel Amoss contents himself with the more modest claim that his ISI created "a psychosis of escape" among Polish fliers.

"Caught Us Off Base"

"Jarecki had never been in touch with my agents," he said. "The story broke very unfortunately and caught us off base. I could show you a telegram that arrived one hour after Lieutenant Jarecki landed on the island of Bornholm."

"If Lieutenant Jarecki wants to say I had nothing to do with his escape," Colonel Amoss said "I won't challenge him."

Amoss' first "secret" letter, boasting of the MIG escape, got into the hands of newspapermen, naturally, and soon the story was on the wires. They learned that former Governor Lane and others had turned over the money to Amoss.

Former Governor Lane is reluctant to talk for publication about the matter now, but he told The Post this:

"We did put up expense money for the purpose of getting a MIG out. One came out. As a matter of fact, another has come out of the same hole."

There was some cause for worry about the original story, in its possible effect on the Danish Government, and on the efforts of American experts to examine the MIG that was flown to Denmark's island of Bornholm.

Chances Improved

The chances of Americans going over the jet plane, it would seem, would be better if it appeared that Lieutenant Jarecki had flown out as he insisted that he did — on his own and without any outside aid. Denmark would thus not be in the position of seeming to have been part of a plot. Conversely, Denmark would be less likely to cooperate if she felt that she was subject to a Russian accusation of aiding and abetting a scheme engineered by an American intelligence organization — even a private one.

In an interview, Colonel Amoss was reminded that some people are skeptical

"That's an understatement," he said, somewhat wryly.

He showed he was well aware of what had been said about him. He referred to a recent article in a news magazine wherein, he said, an unidentified official of the Defense Department said he was "a total loss" and an unidentified official of the Central Intelligence Agency was quoted as saying he "never knew Amoss to be right."

Tells Off Detractors

Colonel Amoss, up to this point, good-humored despite the fact that he had undergone dental surgery the day before, now girded himself to tell off his detractors, saying:

"Any so-called official of the United States Government who, under the cloak of anonymity, attacks the competence or reputation of an American citizen is at the least a coward."

"And what the official in question might have meant was not that he had never known me to be right, but that he had never known me to be left."

"I forecast the outbreak in Korea a month before it came. And my forecast was right within two days."

"I was right within a week in saying when the Chinese would come into the Korean war. And somebody in the Central Intelligence Agency was telling MacArthur that the Chinese were not coming into the Korean war."

"On January 2, 1953, I stated in writing that Stalin was through and that the Red Army had taken control. The people of the United States didn't hear that from the CIA. They had to wait until March when Moscow itself announced it and said that Amoss was right."

"I predicted the Mau Mau outbreaks in Africa 18 months before they came."

"There are dozens and dozens of these things, but I don't want to burden your article."

Hide Behind Anonymity

"You hear a lot about character assassination, but the people they attack the most for this are speaking publicly under their own names. There is an awful lot of fuss about McCarthy, Jenner and McCar-ran, accusing them of character assassination. But they speak out under their own names."

"Here you have men hiding behind anonymity and making an attack upon a patriotic enterprise."

"I have been shot at, threatened, and this termite is sitting behind the safety of anonymity, in Washington and sniping at a private citizen trying to help the country."

Colonel Amoss said he didn't know what was aggravating his critics—whether they were "just eaten up by jealousy," or what.

"I don't presume to be a genius," he went on. "I wouldn't even claim to be a Russian expert. But I've got Russian experts working for me, and they make me look good."

His attention was called to his earlier remark about the ISI being "a patriotic enterprise."

Certainly he thought it was, he said, and went on to add:

"I wouldn't be taking this financial beating if I didn't. I've spent my money and my wife's money in a small effort to contribute to the safety of the United States."

Hopes for Salary

He said he received no salary from the ISI and that the organization paid only 3 percent of his travel expenses. At another point, he said:

"I hope one day to get a salary from the foundation. I've made myself broke in this thing."

Reading several of Amoss' letters and reports to ISI members is a pretty exciting business.

You find out, for example, that "Pontecorvo's (Dr. Bruno Pontecorvo, the Italian scientist who went behind the Iron Curtain) 'Cosmic Ray' does not work against high-flying planes." This "Cosmic Ray," Amoss explains, "is a combination of negative and positive electrical impulses supposed to reduce a plane to a cinder at the apex of the joined beams."

There is other comforting information. As of last June 30, "European intelligence experts do not believe that Russia has an effective atom bomb."

There is evidence of ISI's effectiveness, too. Amoss reported by cable from London on July 12 that ISI's "revelation of the rumors concerning Malenkov's fate in a previous article was sensationally received overseas and widely disseminated. The story forced the Red authorities to produce or, perhaps, reproduce him." But, "liberated or recreated, Malenkov is not long for this world."

In March, 1952, ISI reported that Stalin was being advised by the Politburo to retire, and said that the need to protect his health from overwork would be used as the "official pretext." A month later, Amoss was still warning his readers against "fake stories of Stalin's ill health."

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that "these are times for cool heads and accurate appraisal of Soviet abilities."

Then, on August 11, comforting news came from agent Janisl in Aachen: "Supreme Soviet secretly decided abandon further armed aggression for the present."

"Preparations Intensified"

Similarly, on September 14, Amoss told his subscribers, "Soviet preparations for a change-over from military aggression to world revolution are being intensified and will be greatly expanded."

But on October 24, the word was: "Soviet Russia is flexing her military muscles."

And two days later, "Soviet war preparations must be taken seriously. 1959 is a possible target date."

ISI subscribers received sound advice from the colonel last March 4: "Meanwhile—don't believe anything you read about Soviet Russia as sure."

The Post reporter, in interviewing Colonel Amoss in his Gibson Island office, happened to pick up an old special letter. He thought for a moment that he had found evidence that the ISI chief was fallible, just like ordinary folk.

The Intelligence item, which Colonel Amoss sent out in March, 1952, said that Stalin was going to retire and be succeeded by Molotov.

Had he stubbed his toe on that one? Had one of his agents overseas, perhaps, passed on some misinformation?

"No," Colonel Amoss said very seriously. "That really was the plan, but it went awry."

Insight on Changes

But by January, Amoss revealed that Stalin had suffered a stroke, and has been boasting of this three-month beat on the CIA ever since.

Amoss' reports give one an insight on how quickly and erratically plans change inside the Kremlin.

For example, early this year, on January 21, Amoss reported from London, "No war for a long time—except in various areas."

But only a month later, in an "Urgent" letter, he disclosed: "The next ten months will be critical—dangerous. According to present plan: Soviet Russia will mobilize her armed forces on a war basis within this period. THIS WILL BE A BLUFF (to frighten Western nations into pressuring America to deal with the Reds). But—the bluff may miscarry." The colonel warns